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# The Student Conference at Hartsdale, N. Y.

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December 26-29, 1922

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## Why The Conference Was Called

The student conference held at Hartsdale, N. Y., under the auspices of the National Student Forum was one of the first moves of the American student in changing his vocation from that of audience to that of actor. There is rather too much of the side lines in our education. One man lectures and 100 listen, 22 play football and 20,000 cheer. The student satisfies all demands made of him if he is a fairly intelligent and responsive audience.

This regime has produced a certain boredom and restlessness. We have grown. Our spiritual legs no longer fit into the cramped and uniform seats of the auditorium. We must act. We must recognize and accept our responsibility as members of the community, as inheritors of civilization, and creators of the future.

Our kindly elders have striven to shield us from such a heavy burden. They were afraid we could not stagger under it. But, had they seen the students at Hartsdale consuming ham and eggs as freely as ideas and being far more ready to think than to cry over the "sa-ad" condition of the world, they would have realized that this sense of responsibility, this share in the actual life of the community which has been so carefully withheld from us, is the one thing necessary to give an object and a meaning to life.

This conference was called then to consider the economic basis of our education so that we might define and accept our responsibility toward the community and especially toward the institution of higher learning.

## Who Came

Delegates from the student governments, the newspapers and the liberal clubs of the following 28 colleges attended the conference: Adelphi, Barnard, Brookwood, Bryn Mawr, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Chicago, Columbia, Connecticut College, Dartmouth, Goucher, Harvard, Hollins, Hood, Hunter, Miami, Mt. Holyoke, Oberlin, Radcliffe, Rockford, Simmons, Smith, Swarthmore, Union Theological, Union Theological, and Union Theological.

Vassar, Wellesley, Wilson, Wisconsin, Yale. The League of Junior Cities also sent a delegate. In addition Kenneth Lindsay of Oxford and five of the foreign students whom the Forum has brought to the United States were present. These were Joachim Friedrich of Heidelberg, Hans Tiesler of the International Peoples' College, Piet Roest of Leiden, Antonin Palecek of Prague, and Jorgen Holck of Copenhagen.

## Summaries

### Summary of Discussion on the Economic Basis of Education

The American students agreed that many classes, capitalists, intellectuals, etc., contribute to education but all get a fairly adequate return for their labor except the ordinary worker. He usually gets very little education and often he does not even

receive the necessities of life. (See p. 5, col. 1, 2.)

"We are," the students decided, "in debt to the worker, how shall we repay him?"

Several students believed it was immoral to accept education at such a cost to the

worker and advocated leaving college at once. (See p. 7, col. 1.)

The majority, however, pointed out that as long as they ate food and wore clothes they were doing it, under the present social system, at an unfair cost to the worker. They thought it better to stay at college and fit themselves to repay the debt as efficiently as possible, preparing themselves for worker's education or any work which offered a chance to reconstruct society. (See p. 7, col. 2.)

But we can only stay in college if the college is really preparing us to repay this debt. Is it? Is the college teaching us to look at social and economic questions from an unbiased view point? Is it preparing us to be social engineers? Does it give us the ability both to enjoy life and to order it justly? The conference decided that while college could teach us these things it largely failed to do so for three reasons:

1. Academic freedom is suppressed. (See p. 3, col. 2.)
2. The curriculum is not suited to the present social needs and the instruction is not vital. (See p. 4, col. 2.)
3. The students are out of touch with the rest of the community and especially with the worker. (See p. 6, col. 2.)

#### Summary of Practical Suggestions

If our four years in college are not to be a mere parasitic sucking of ornamental benefits we must remedy these three conditions. The following suggestions were made:

1. To secure academic freedom.
  - a. Appoint committees on academic freedom to work with the faculty for faculty and student representation on the board of trustees. (See p. 4, col. 1.)
  - b. Let the student forums invite to the colleges speakers whose points of view are not given in the University. If these men are not allowed to speak on the college grounds the students can go elsewhere to hear them. (See p. 3, col. 2.)
  - c. Whenever a breach of academic freedom occurs in your college call upon all constituent members of the Forum to help at once with publicity and other appropriate support.

2. To secure a less chaotic curriculum and more vital instruction:

a. Appoint committees to study the existing curriculum with a view to possible revision. (See p. 4, col. 1, 2.)

b. Work for an extension of the system of honors in force at Smith, Barnard and elsewhere, also for an extension of the tutorial system. Study the merits and shortcomings of the marking system (See p. 5, col. 1.)

c. Persuade individual instructors who are favorably inclined to conduct their classes on the project method.

3. To keep in touch with the community:

a. Go into worker's education while at college, either as tutors or assistant instructors. (See p. 7, col. 1, 2.)

b. Invite groups of workers and others to meet with your discussion clubs in order to keep in close touch with outside points of view. (See p. 6, col. 2.)

c. Go into industry in the summer vacation so that you may work with as well as talk with laborers.

4. To make this work effective use all methods of publicity. Establish in your college papers a regular column to report the work of the committees on academic freedom and the curriculum, to give the facts of your endowments and the control of your college etc. (See p. 5, col. 2.)

#### Immediate Action Possible for Forums

1. Secure a publicity column and use it.
2. Call other conferences such as this at Hartsdale.
3. Invite groups of workers and others to come in and help you in your discussion groups.

#### Summary of the Contribution of the Foreign Students

The foreign students spoke of the youth movements in their countries. These youth movements are far from being unified. They are composed of political groups, groups of abstainers, of anti-militarists, of artists, of educators. But they are animated by one spirit: the belief that each individual must be allowed to develop and express himself always with a feeling of responsibility for himself and toward others. Youth has its own contribution to make to culture and life. This contribution does not lie so much in the reform of

institutions as in the development of personalities which shall necessitate that reform and so make it effective. (See p. 7-10.)

The American students perceived that this was the same spirit which animated their efforts, and that they were in effect trying to translate it into practical group action.

#### A Move Toward Peace

At the end of the conference a group of students who had for some time been discussing current problems in their liberal clubs, decided that it was time for them to assume a definite attitude toward certain of these problems.

This group felt that the gravest danger threatening their ideal of free responsible development was war. Life can be far more beautiful than we have realized, personality can be far richer, but war will destroy and embitter both, and we are not far from the next war.

They wished therefore to form groups to avert war, and as a beginning proposed to study the causes of war and diplomatic methods. They suggested joining the International League of Youth which is described in this issue of the *New Student*, and urged all like minded young people to join with them. (See p. 11, col. 2.)

#### Full Report

##### TUESDAY EVENING

The sixty odd students who gathered at Hartsdale came there to discuss a problem very vital to them. They did not ask to see their rooms. Some of them even forgot to register, and later found that beds do not grow in the night like mushrooms. But students are notoriously able to stretch their beds, meals, and ideas to include all their friends and comrades and the entire delegation was finally housed.

A very thorough dinner disclosed a certain energy latent in all these young people and at 9.00 they sat down to discuss the economic basis of our education and the problems raised thereby.

##### The Function of College Not Realised

It was quickly agreed that the function of a college is in general to give the student a truthful and comprehensive idea of the society in which he lives, so that he may

go into that society with the vision and ability to enrich it, and to develop it in justice and in peace.

Does college do this as a rule? Looking round at one another, we had to admit that in spite of our sincerity, charm and companionableness, we could not lay claim to being such products, nor did we believe most students could make any such claim for themselves.

Where was the trouble? Could we find it? Could we cure it?

##### Lack of Academic Freedom one Trouble

First and foremost, academic freedom was frequently suppressed. We were allowed to hear only those things which the college administration approved. We were not getting a truthful idea of society.

Professors and instructors are dismissed for their opinions. The long list from Scott Nearing at the University of Pennsylvania through Columbia's hysterical dismissal of half a dozen of her best professors down to the recent separation between Willian Jewell College and a professor who, among other heresies, had unorthodox ideas on the date of the book of Daniel—all this was rehearsed. Freedom of teaching is not secure.

Again there was given case upon case of groups of students who were not permitted to hear the ideas of certain speakers—at least not upon the college campus. Every student knows these things—freedom of learning is not secure.

Who curtails this freedom and why is it curtailed? Ultimately the trustees, they tell us "It would hurt the college," i.e. it would frighten away certain moneys and students.

##### Endowment Drives Not Good

In this connection certain students questioned the value to higher learning of the periodic endowment drives. It seemed to them that the competitive efforts of colleges and universities in soliciting funds for more material equipment, a larger staff, and the machinery for handling more students, were creating a situation in which the college, becomes hypersensitive to the idiosyncrasies of those who pledge endowment. The intellectual ideals for the attainment of which the college is supposedly maintained are lost to sight.

The unremitting, relentless search for truth goes on in the "real" college regardless of whether one hundred or more extra students will be enrolled next year. The "real" student will hardly rejoice when the corporation acquires a group of sumptuous structures if the spirit which is to animate them and give them significance is bridled in the acquisition. Of what importance that a college be perpetuated if this is at the cost of purpose, function, and character?

#### Representation on Board of Trustees

Certain students, suggested active work for academic freedom. If the board of trustees controls the college, then the faculty and students should be represented on the board. It is thoroughly undemocratic and un-American to have an institution controlled by only one interest. We as students pay something for our education either in fees or state taxes. "No taxation without representation." We should have self government in the colleges.

It was suggested that committees of students be formed to work with the faculty for academic freedom of teaching and learning, and that the aim of this committee should be to secure representation for the faculty and students on the board of trustees. Even if representation should mean nothing more than immediate publicity for the decisions of the board, it would be worth while.

#### College Is Dull

The suppression of academic freedom is not the only thing which prevents the college from fulfilling its function. To put it baldly a great deal of college is just so many hours of deadly boredom. The curriculum is full of quaint and unrelated requirements which seem to lead nowhere, and when we enter upon the study of such things as civics or sociology hoping to gain some insight into human problems, we are presented with a pile of textbooks and some more or less untidy diagrams on a blackboard.

Somehow the curriculum must be reduced to order, somehow the instruction must be vitalised.

#### Revise the Curriculum

It was suggested that student committees on the curriculum should be appointed. These committees should study the curriculum and should draw up what changes they believe desirable, presenting finally what they consider an ideal curriculum. This is, however, as has been proved at Barnard, little more than a mental exercise, since administrations do not yet believe that students know what they want or that "they won't be happy till they get it."

A more practical activity for the Curriculum Committees is to work with those individual professors who are favorably inclined to secure a more vital method of instruction, so that even if the curriculum is a chaos, some courses in it may be made really valuable.

#### Learn Through Practical Work

A number of students for instance agreed that economics is taught in such a manner that what we learn seems to have no application to contemporary economic and sociological controversies.

As the study is now presented to the student, he cannot see the forest for the trees, and the mere acquisition of encyclopaedic information seems so pointless that only the occasional student, who can sustain intellectual activity from the pure love of doing so, maintains an insatiable appetite for the dehumanized and devitalized intellectual banquet. But there is the rare bird who, in spite of the strained detachment of the professor and the general atmosphere of repression, intuitively feels that these inexact sciences of economics and sociology have some significance for men, that here are fields of study which, if mastered, might supply the means whereby the social impasse might be at least directed toward solution.

This for the young mind is a truly great conception. It sets the student's intense being throbbing with purpose, his knowing has acquired social function.

This might be the enviable fate of many students could they realise from the beginning the connection between printed problems and living ones. Several students believed that the project method of teaching would bring this about. The

members of a class in civics or sociology might make connections with their local municipalities, civic clubs, etc. and work out with them practical problems which would bring in many of the theoretical ramifications discussed in class. The curricular committees should persuade professors to use this project method, and not only in the social sciences.

#### WEDNESDAY MORNING

##### Honors Standard Not Marks

One more suggestion was made to vitalise teaching.

Some students felt that the existing marking system had a stultifying effect upon whatever excellent intellectual intentions the young student might have. To think seriously and painstakingly at the age of twenty or so, seemed quite an undertaking, while to go through the unnatural mental gymnastics of measuring this off in three hours a week, one point a piece, for a hundred and twenty four points for four years, at excellent, good, fair, poor, bad—in addition, was to stagger the intelligence and permanently cripple the curiosity. After all, is it possible to measure accomplishment by such mechanical, impersonal, and systematic standards? It rather reeks with corporation accountancy, which is excellent in the corporation but folly in an institution for the cultivation of the spirit.

So these students favored what is now termed an "honors standard" in force at Barnard, Smith and elsewhere which gives the student the benefit of the doubt that he has come to college because he has a thirst for knowledge and understanding. It apprentices him to some scholar in the faculty, and lets him contemplate that field of learning in which he may be interested, untrammelled by the bureaucrats who compute college records.

##### Human Cost of Education

So far the economic basis of education had been considered only in its effects on education. Now it was to be considered as a human problem.

Certain students claimed that colleges, like all other institutions, were being ultimately supported by the wage-earner.

Others objected that this was nonsense, and that capitalists, intellectuals and even

poor boobs supported our institution. But they admitted that the wage-earner didn't get a fair return for what he put into education; that, moreover, he was more or less coerced into giving, as what should have been his to do with as he liked was never given him at all.

The wage-earner is barely able to live, receives none of the benefits of higher education and yet he contributes something, a great deal in fact, towards its support.

Not only does he not receive any benefits from it, but education is actually used as a weapon against him. It is used to preserve the present order of society and the control of the present interests, and to prevent the worker from coming into his heritage. In other words, the worker is perpetually "coerced to build the walls that imprison him, to sharpen the sword that lops off his limbs and prevents his development," etc., with many striking rhetorical similes.

##### Others Should be Told

In spite of the rhetoric the case was clear. Many students saw it for the first time. They decided it was not sufficient for the mere sixty or seventy students who attended the Conference to concern themselves with the condition of the colleges and their fellowmen. These problems are of primary importance to every college undergraduate. A recognition of them infuses his work and his relationship to others with a new, more purposeful spirit.

The students suggested establishing a column in the several college papers, which should serve as a medium of expression for the findings and opinions of those who wished to study fundamental college affairs and present them to the entire undergraduate body—at present apathetic. Such a column should publish the investigations and recommendations of student committees on academic freedom and the curriculum. It should be fearless and without respect for any authority whatsoever except that of truth.

There should be no censorship. That which is false or mistaken cannot stand in the competitive struggle of intelligence. This is the spirit of the liberal free college. Well may we dedicate a brief section of the college press to its cultivation.

## WEDNESDAY EVENING

### "The Goose Step"

Upton Sinclair's "The Goose Step," a study of American education from the economic viewpoint, was discussed at length and in some detail. Sinclair's contention is that the colleges and universities, which in purpose and function are public and social, have come under the control and direction of a single group in society—the business interests.

The college president is seen as the creature of a board of trustees who have effective control over the affairs of the college, both as to what shall be taught and how, and who shall teach it. The professors have only such freedom and security of tenure as is consistent with the preservation of the economic and other superstitions of the authorities.

Sinclair, in establishing his theses, cites the endowment and control of a large number of colleges and universities. Endowments are shown in many cases, at least in the East, to be invested in industrial public utilities, railroads, etc., while boards of trustees seem quite consistently to represent the manufacturing, commercial, and banking interests with a surprisingly small representation of farmers and practically no laborers. The resulting academic policy includes an uncurious, intellectually fearful attitude toward radicalism and the workers. Speakers are occasionally prevented from addressing student audiences and professors with strong unorthodox social convictions find their tenure uncertain and their work with the students curtailed.

### Its Accuracy

The Conference by no means showed a willingness to accept Mr. Sinclair's opinions. Several students questioned the value of his authority. A student from the University of Wisconsin, who had some first hand information as to the method and thoroughness with which Mr. Sinclair worked at Wisconsin, was of the opinion that had he been consistently painstaking and accurate in the other colleges he investigated, "The Goose Step" might be taken as an illuminating commentary of considerable truth.

### Why Worry? What Can We Do?

A strong plea was made that we separate the source of the money from its control. It does not matter where the money comes from. Money is not in itself bad or good. It is we who make it so by our use of it. If we can insure academic freedom and an honest education in our colleges, it is of no practical importance where the money comes from.

Can students insure such an education? It was reported that the students in Miami had secured the removal of a dean whose presence was prejudicial to education. At Princeton, there is a committee of five students and five faculty who discuss curricular reform, ways of giving examinations, etc., but they have been unable to agree with the faculty and have not accomplished much. It was suggested that the liberal clubs could do much to insure academic freedom and honest education.

### Get in Touch With Others

Academic freedom is of course necessary but we can't just be free like advertised air. That's no use to us. We want an opportunity to use our freedom intelligently on current problems. College students are too much cut off from the rest of the community. We must get into touch with other groups—business men, artists, inventors, journalists, workers: all those who are trying to solve the problems we are trying to understand.

It was pointed out that the colleges often brought business men, diplomats, etc., to talk to the students. Liberal clubs should extend this work and should make a special effort to get in touch with workers. The college does not bring these men to address us. We must rely upon ourselves to get in touch with that very large section of humanity.

In several colleges the liberal clubs have invited groups of workers to meet with them, and the presence of these young men and women from industry has sharpened the discussion, and kept it on the practical human aspect of the social questions.

### Can We Accept Education?

Again, the students returned to the point that they were being educated by depriving the wage-earners of their fair share in a full and well rounded life. Certain stu-

dents declared they were therefore in debt to the worker and should repay him, either by passing on the education, or by working to bring about changes in society which would give to him a just share in its goods.

Whereupon was raised the startling question, "Is it honest to remain at college, living off the worker, taking what we have no right to—and we admit we have no right to it because we all believe we should repay it. Ought we not to leave college at once?"

The chairman had good lungs and used them and a young law student gesticulating with a ping-pong racket finally obtained the floor. It was his opinion that there was no point in arguing the moral problem raised in the financing of education, that it was the student's business to see his education was honest and let it go at that. Protests rose from all over the room. The speaker therefore moved the following:

"Resolved that the moral problem raised in financing education is not one of immediate practical interest to the student."

This resolution was overwhelmingly defeated. One student suggested that if a moral problem is raised, it is always of immediate practical importance, if the people discussing it are morally inclined. This seemed to be the opinion of nearly all present.

Having agreed on the moral question, the students nevertheless differed as to its solution.

#### No

Some advocated leaving college. They felt that they were profiting by injustice, that they were complacently burdening the worker with arduous toil and dulling his brain, so that they might skim the cream of civilization, taking themselves whatever beautiful and intellectual things civilization had to offer, leaving the worker to deadening mediocrity and a gray, sodden life.

#### Yes

Others objected, "What if you do leave college? You will still wear clothes and eat food and these things also are produced at a greater cost to the workman than to anyone else. If you want to feel completely just, if you refuse to burden any worker in any way, you must commit suicide."

Those who advocated leaving college answered in effect: "We know it is impossible to be consistent. We must compromise

with this evil system in some few instances, but we will not do so more than necessary. We will eat and wear clothes and sleep in shelter but beyond the necessities of life we will not burden the worker and we will ourselves assist to bear the burden by working as laborers, and giving them whatever we have gotten."

The practical students demanded: "Why not stay in college so that you would have more to give the worker, so that you could more efficiently help him to bear the burden."

They decided that a university education could be very helpful in giving them a quick and thorough grasp of the social system and in showing them how to work practically for the establishment of one more just.

#### Only if Education is Honest

If the education given were not honest and vital, they agreed they ought to leave college. If they remained, they had to see to it that they received this kind of education. It was up to them, and they repeated the suggestions of the previous evening by which they might insure for themselves an honorable and socially useful education.

### THURSDAY MORNING

#### Leave College or Stay

The discussion of the previous evening was crystallized—The students who advocated leaving college declared that they believed a change in the personal attitude would in the end of necessity change the system and that it was for the personal change we should work.

The other students held that while a personal change was the most necessary thing, it was also necessary to develop a technique by which this personal attitude or spirit could be applied in our institutions. Society is so complicated that it requires considerable engineering skill to apply even the most willing spirit of justice. They therefore held that we should work both for a change in personal attitude and in institutions.

The foreign students were then asked to contribute something of the spirit of the youth movements of their countries.

#### Dutch Youth Movement

Piet Roest of Holland spoke first. He is very good looking with a twinkle in his

blue eyes. "Well," said he, looking cheerfully round the circle of serious young faces, "in Holland, we do not let ourselves be crushed by these world problems. We think it is for the spirit of youth to express itself, gaily, joyously, as it wishes. It would be hypocritical to act as if we were always grieved about these unjust institutions. We aren't. We believe if we express the spirit that is in us, the spirit will create new institutions.

"This spirit is a new attitude toward life. It is not mechanical. All mechanisms are only a means to the development of this spirit. We believe we must make our personality of greater value to society. We must live for the evolution of the human race. Our whole life is the only contribution we can make to society and so we must make our life rich and worth something.

"Organization can help your work; it can multiply it but it can't do it. You must conceive it and do it of yourself.

"The Youth Movement in Holland has no common program. It is composed of different political, economic, anti-militarist groups, etc., all united only by this spirit of service and self-development."

#### Scandinavian Youth Movement

Jorgen Holck of Denmark spoke for all the Scandinavian countries. He has a careful and exact enunciation and says quite calmly things that would make an ordinary American leap on a soap-box or take to the cellar according to his point of view.

"We realize," he said, "that Scandinavia will soon be controlled by the workers, therefore we think it is a good thing to educate the workers and teach them such things as how to run a country and industry and so forth.

"In Denmark, in Copenhagen, we have committees composed of students, practical business men, and workers who meet together several times a week to discuss social problems, taxation and such like things. Each gets the other's view and can come to a more intelligent and fair decision.

"The students also started an evening school for the workers where they passed on the learning they received at college. After a while, the municipality saw the

value of these schools and now has taken them over.

"In the settlement, students meet the workers and become friends with them. So we are all getting educated together.

"In Sweden, the people are not very interested in politics. Here the students go out in groups to the villages and give lectures on social subjects and things that are useful for farmers to know.

"In Norway, the students are most closely connected with the workers. Together they issue a paper called *Mot Dag*. It is very radical and they are connected with the Third Internationale. They work also to revive the old Norwegian culture which has been a little stifled by the superimposed Danish culture."

#### Czecho-Slovakian Students

Antonin Palecek spoke on the history and spirit of the Youth Movement in Czecho-Slovakia.

"This movement started in 1880. It was composed of young people both reactionary and progressive who wished to express themselves. Later on it took a very decided stand against aggressive nationalism. Ex-President Masaryk, who was at that time a professor, had great influence with the young people.

"During the war, the students became more and more liberal. Many of them over fourteen years of age were imprisoned for expressing belief in and sympathy with Russia. Those under fourteen were considered too young to suffer this penalty.

"At present, the progressive student movement is embodied in the student Renaissance which stands for self-improvement, honesty and earnestness.

"The most important work of this organization is for peace. Economic questions are less important in Czecho-Slovakia than the question of peace or war, for the country is surrounded on all sides by different nationalities. Instead of building up huge armaments, however, the country works for international friendship.

"This is promoted to a great degree by the "Students Home" which is run entirely by the students. Here seventeen nationalities live and work together. Special efforts are made to create friendship between German and Czech students.

"The student Renaissance does also a great deal of educative work. A committee of students and workmen last year planned and delivered a series of lectures on politics, art, religion, etc. From fifty to two hundred workmen attended each one. Lectures are also given to soldiers and workers on social and economic questions. Students promptly pass on what they learn.

"They also cooperate with the Red Cross in making investigations for distribution of relief and have thus additional contact with the workers.

"There are of course many groups of students with differing ideas. They are united only in the desire to be of service to their country and to preserve peace."

#### German Universities

Joachim Friedrich next spoke on the activities of the German students. He speaks in inimitable English which cannot be here reproduced. It is to be hoped that many students will have the opportunity of hearing him. "There is," he told us, "a great difference between the German and American way of getting things started. In America somebody has a private idea and at once he starts a club to talk about it and spread it. In Germany, the idea grows up in a group and it spreads itself.

"After the war, especially, the German students distrusted organization and education from above. They wanted to be a center of self-education and self-government and this they have somewhat accomplished.

"One in every hundred students is elected to a 'committee.' These committees in turn form 'circles' of which there are ten in Germany. These 'circles' are the executive agents for the 'Studententag' which is modeled after the 'Reichstag' and has one representative for every thousand students. The Studententag has four students as its executive committee. The chairman's business is to get the student law carried out in the university; the secretary keeps the universities in touch with one another; the economist runs the self help organizations; and the foreign secretary has not done much as the students have been almost entirely occupied in solv-

ing their own problems, economic and otherwise.

"The Studententag is working along two main lines:

"1. University reform. The students want the power to choose and dismiss their own professors and to have those things taught which they wish to learn.

"2. Restriction of students. The universities are overcrowded. Whereas the population of Germany has decreased 5%, the student population has not decreased at all. Many people want to restrict the number of students along race lines. The Youth Movement is quite opposed to this suggestion. It stands for a national culture but also for complete racial tolerance."

#### English Students

Kenneth Lindsay of Oxford, who has been touring American colleges on a traveling fellowship granted by the Workers Education Bureau, managed to keep the attention of the hungry delegates from their luncheon by his most interesting remarks.

He said that in England they had tried to organize a League of Youth embodying the spirit which Piet Roest had expressed. Everyone felt that it was according to this spirit that they wished to live but it had proved impossible to hold Englishmen together by anything so intangible. The League of Youth had ended up with very few members, one of them being the Lord Mayor of London and another Lord Bryce.

The spirit, however, cannot be suppressed. It shows itself now, in economics, politics and religion, and in such organizations as the labor clubs in the universities. The Englishman must translate this spirit into action before he can actually realize it.

This new conception of individual values works out in many practical ways: in guild socialism—the builders' guild especially moves toward a fuller richer life—in workers' education, etc.

There is little interest in the control of the universities, because these are quite free. Recently two communists who would never have even been let in to the United States were expelled from Oxford. The whole country protested:—newspapers, individuals and clubs. Manifestoes were issued by the score and it is quite unlikely that such a thing will happen again.

## THURSDAY EVENING

All Thursday there was an ice storm. The evening was pretty cold and the students were glad enough to gather around the fire. On this last evening they hoped if possible to get at the heart of the unrest which had drawn them together.

### The German Youth Movement

Hans Tiesler was speaking about the German Youth Movement. "Youth has its own culture and its own tasks," he said. The youth of Germany before the war felt that the older generation repress them, that it tried to impose untrue mechanical ideal upon them, or else it tried to uplift them to fit into other people's standards. So a group of young people near Berlin one day left their parents and left their schools and their churches and went to wander in the great woods of Germany. Here they could talk freely and live their own lives. Many such bands of young people wandered about Germany. They are the Wandervogel.

"You can understand the spiritual background of this Youth Movement better if you remember always that it is for self-culture in a spirit of responsibility. These young people have their own ideas on money, sex and so forth. They agree in this only: that property and other institutions are not good or bad in themselves. It is we who make them so. The institution depends on us. So this movement puts the spirit first. It is religious; not a religion to take to church, but to live.

"Ten thousand of these Wandervogel went into the war. They were not imperialists. They were fighting to express their idealism. The pity is they died for empty phrases. Now comes the younger generation—with them is a reaction against war, not against the horror and the blood of war, but against the folly of war.

"Now they are working for the reconstruction of Germany, but that is not all. Their work is also for the spiritual reconstruction of the world."

### What is the Spirit?

"You have spoken a good deal about spirit and spiritual background," remarked one student, "what is this spiritual background?"

Hans smoked a little.

"That is to know that you are part of

the whole humanity and are responsible," he said.

"Oh," replied the student.

In response to questions Hans Tiesler told further that the German Youth Movement had friendly connections with some of the French Youth through the publication of various journals and through individual correspondence in the Weltjugendliga.

"Youth Movement is a revolution against conventions," he said, "so we have not, like the older generation, a convention to hate France."

"Do you think there could be a Youth Movement in America?" asked someone, perhaps a little wistfully.

"Why not?" said Hans, "you have here so great a spiritual need as there was in Germany only perhaps you don't know it so well yet."

Presently the delegates began discussing the possibilities of the National Student Forum as a factor in the Youth Movement in America. Several Barnard delegates pointed out that their faculty had not yet permitted them to affiliate with the Forum, and that consequently they were at a great disadvantage.

"It does not matter so much," they were told, "the Youth Movement is a spirit. It is stronger than the Forum. We shall all be back of you to help you. If you want to be with us, you are with us; the name is not so important, nor the organization."

### The Conference Summed Up

The main points of the Conference were summed up as being:

The cost of education—What could we do about it?—We must at least study the question from all points of view and admit our responsibility towards the worker.

The Youth Movement in America—Should we work more to develop the individual spirit or should we rely more on organization.

Academic Freedom—How could we get and keep it?

Student discussion groups—How could these be made less like informal classes? How could they make vital social contacts so that the student would know he was discussing human beings and not syllogisms?

After most of the students had retired

to bed, certain others continued talking, although they had nothing to sustain them but a little ice water and a great deal of hope. When they finally got into bed at 2:00 A. M. they whispered to their partly roused roommates that they had something to suggest next day.

#### FRIDAY MORNING

Seven-thirty saw the energetic conference once more awake. An opportunity was given Mr. McArthur to report on the National League of Junior Cities, of which he was a delegate.

##### The League of Junior Cities

"The National Student Forum is not the whole of the Youth Movement in America," he said. "The League of Junior Cities is with you and I hope there will soon be many other youth groups."

The Junior Cities, started in New Jersey, are a miniature replica of the senior city government. They are composed of the young people between 16 and 21 years old. They tackle the same problems as the senior government as well as those which especially concern themselves. They make suggestions to the board of education and other official bodies and more than once their decisions have influenced those of their elders. They cooperate with the senior government wherever possible. In Newark they are allowed to arrest and try junior violators of the traffic laws and of certain other regulations. As 75% of the crime is committed by juniors it can be seen how useful it is to enlist them on the side of law and order, rather than to leave them the romantic opportunity of outwitting the elderly guardians of the law.

It was suggested that if credit in civics and government could be given at school and college for work in the Junior City, it would be very helpful. For the time of young people is filled to overflowing and largely with duties not half as developing as such work would be.

Those who are obliged to leave the Junior City at the age of 21 are forming a League of Youth to help other Junior Cities get on their feet.

Then were presented individually the practical suggestion which each student thought most useful in carrying out the spirit of the Conference. They are summarized on page 2.

The group of students who had sat up so late the night before now had an opportunity to present their plan.

#### Why Not Have Peace?

They stated that while it might be an old story to some, they had just come to realize that personality is the supreme thing in life. Personality is infinitely richer and more varied and full of possibility than we ever dream.

We should not all be pressed into one button mould, either by education or by economic necessity. Everyone should have the opportunity to develop fully and freely and express freely his own definite personality without trenching upon others. Some might wish to express themselves in the theater, in education, in art.

Peace was the way in which this particular group wished to express themselves. They felt that war was the thing which most threatened development. They wished to avert war and they proposed as a beginning to form college groups which should:

1. Study the causes of war.
2. Study diplomatic methods.
3. Join international youth organizations which are working to abolish war.

These groups ought to have some central organization which could express their decisions and make all possible use of such a section of public opinion. The National Student Forum could not be this central organization because the Forum cannot take a stand on anything.

It was then debated whether the Forum could offer hospitality to these projected groups. Since the Forum stands for free speech and a hearing for all shades of opinion, it is possible that it might include such groups. But the question was left undecided.

Anyone interested in forming such groups should communicate with Ruth Ayres, Elliot Hall, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.

#### Effect on the Forum

It was, however, moved that the National Student Forum revise its preamble to express something of the spirit of free self-development and self-expression that had animated the Conference, the real spirit of the youth movement. All felt that this

spirit had always been implicit in the Forum and now some desired that it be made explicit. The motion was carried with 3 dissenting votes out of approximately 20.

The preamble is in process of revision. It was supposed to have been completed by 4:00 o'clock that afternoon, but due

to several members of the revision committee being overcome by sleep, the work was not done. Hans Tiesler, looking at his new American watch made in Switzerland, remarked:

"American Youth Movement, born 1 o'clock, died 5 o'clock," but perhaps he was a little previous with his prophecies.

## What I Believe at the Close of the Conference

By E. BENJAMIN, Rockford College

There are evils in the present social order. The men who have created it have neither enough love for their fellow men nor enough respect for themselves. The social order itself is full of injustice. A large group of men who labor with their hands receive so small a compensation that they cannot support average-sized families in decency. A very much smaller group who work with their brains but do not organize receive too little return to educate their children. A very small group organizes industry, obtains profits, and is enabled to live in luxury. Money, then, is distributed according to the ability and energy of a group of organizers, not according to the needs of men. Higher Education, being a recent development of the social order, is still almost crudely within the influence of the organizers who have endowed it. To a greater or less degree each college finds its academic freedom limited by this group.

To change institutions by educating the future donors to give, but to leave the con-

trol of their gifts with experts; by educating the children of the future in the ideals of economic justice; and by educating the students in the necessity for adequate class discussion, adequate curricula, and adequate freedom of expression—this is to take the most immediate step toward correcting the existing evils. It can be accomplished by teaching, by vital discussion in the liberal clubs, by the organization of curricular committees.

But this is not enough.

To re-create men by the simple influence of a life lived according to the spiritual ideals of oneself, a life in constant personal contact with those individuals whom we are best able to serve, a life of self-realization in unselfish service—this is the most fundamental step toward the freedom of that social order which we seek to bring about.

Every individual in America, whose standard is this, is a part of our Youth Movement.

## Other Conferences

### Advice to Those About to Hold Conferences

1. The spirit of the conference is the most important factor in its success. It should be tolerant, openminded and willing to hear all sides.
2. The subject should be limited, and several of the conferees should in advance look up the necessary facts which may not be known to all.
3. The place should be as cheap as possible and preferably in the country.
4. Each member should pay his own expenses or have them paid by his group. The only expenses of the conference com-

mittee should be in publishing and distributing announcements of the conference.

5. Do not let your conference be guided from above by older people or people who wish to inject some special doctrine into it. Be yourselves.

### Future Conferences

The University of Chicago and Oberlin have already written to ask for suggestions about holding student conferences. Chicago intends to include groups of young workers and others as well as students.

Swarthmore has definitely decided to organise a conference in the Philadelphia region.

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